

120.01	General
120.02	References
120.03	Definitions
120.04	Legislation and Policy Development
120.05	Planning at WSDOT
120.06	Linking Transportation Plans
120.07	Linking WSDOT Planning to Programming

## 120.01 General

Planning is a decision making process used to solve complex, interrelated problems. Transportation needs are typically identified by various transportation interests including local, regional, and state governments; businesses; and community groups. The needs are then evaluated in the framework provided by local, regional, and state land use and transportation policies and by state and federal laws. Identified transportation needs are also evaluated based on projected fiscal constraints.

The result of the statewide planning process is a list of transportation strategies (projects, activities, and services); consistent with local, regional, and state policies; and supported by the general public through the public involvement process.

Ultimately, the planning process constrains the strategies, based on projected available resources, and determines which transportation projects may be selected for programming, design, and construction. The goal is to create an integrated transportation system capable of supporting a vital economy, vibrant communities, and a sustainable environment.

## 120.02 References

Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) of 1998

*Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR)

23 CFR 450 subpart B, “Statewide Transportation Planning”

23 CFR 450 subpart C, “Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming”

40 CFR, “Clean Air Act,” parts 51 and 93

*United States Code* (USC) 23 USC 134, “Metropolitan planning”

23 USC 135, “Statewide planning”

*Revised Code of Washington* (RCW)

RCW 35.58.2795, “Public transportation systems — Six-year transit plans.”

RCW 35.77.010(2), “Perpetual advanced six-year plans for coordinated transportation program expenditures — Nonmotorized transportation — Railroad right-of-way”

RCW 36.70A, “Growth management — Planning by selected counties and cities”

RCW 36.81.121(2), “Perpetual advanced six-year plans for coordinated transportation program, expenditures — Nonmotorized transportation — Railroad right-of-way”

RCW 47.05, “Priority Programming for Highway Development”

RCW 47.06, “State-Wide Transportation Planning”

RCW 47.38, “Roadside Areas - Safety Rest Areas”

RCW 47.39, “Scenic and Recreational Highway Act of 1967” and changes thereto

RCW 47.50, “Highway Access Management”

RCW 47.76.220, “State rail plan - Contents”

RCW 47.80, “Regional Transportation Planning Organizations”

RCW 70.94, “Washington Clean Air Act”

*Washington Administrative Code* (WAC)

WAC 468-51 and 52, “Highway Access Management”

WAC 468-86, “RTPO Planning Standards and Guidelines”

*Roadside Manual*, M 25-30, WSDOT

## 120.03 Definitions

<b>ARB</b>	Agency Request Budget
<b>B/C</b>	Benefit/Cost
<b>CFR</b>	<i>Code of Federal Regulations</i>
<b>CLB</b>	Current Law Budget
<b>CMP</b>	<i>Corridor Management Plan</i>
<b>FAST Corridor</b>	Freight Action Strategy for the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma Corridor
<b>FGTS</b>	Freight and Goods Transportation System
<b>FHWA</b>	Federal Highway Administration
<b>FTA</b>	Federal Transit Administration
<b>GMA</b>	Growth Management Act
<b>HSP</b>	<i>State Highway System Plan</i>
<b>HSS</b>	Highways of Statewide Significance
<b>ISTEA</b>	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
<b>LOS</b>	Level of Service
<b>MTIP</b>	Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program
<b>MPO</b>	Metropolitan Planning Organization
<b>OSC</b>	Olympia Service Center
<b>OUM</b>	Office of Urban Mobility
<b>PSRC</b>	Puget Sound Regional Council
<b>RCW</b>	<i>Revised Code of Washington</i>
<b>RDP</b>	<i>Route Development Plan</i>
<b>RTIP</b>	Regional Transportation Improvement Program
<b>RTPO</b>	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
<b>SEPA</b>	State Environmental Policy Act
<b>SHSP</b>	<i>State Highway System Plan</i> also known as the HSP
<b>STIP</b>	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
<b>TDM</b>	Travel Demand Management

**TEA-21** Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of 1998

**TIP** Transportation Improvement Program

**TPO** Transportation Planning Office

**USC** *United States Code*

**WAC** *Washington Administrative Code*

**WSDOT** Washington State Department of Transportation

**WTP** *Washington's Transportation Plan*

## 120.04 Legislation and Policy Development

The Washington State Legislature requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to plan, develop, maintain, and preserve the transportation network in accordance with all state laws and federal requirements. The Washington State Transportation Commission interprets these requirements into a set of policies that guide the process.

The Washington State Transportation Commission consists of seven members who are appointed by the Governor. This body serves as the board of directors for WSDOT and provides oversight to ensure that the department delivers a quality, multimodal transportation system that moves people and goods safely and efficiently. The Commission also develops plans and funding recommendations for Legislative approval.

The following are highlights of important federal and state legal requirements that influence or direct planning activities at WSDOT. These legal requirements must be satisfied for WSDOT to expend federal and state transportation funds.

### (1) **Federal Law: Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21)**

The Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21), passed in 1998, authorizes highway safety, transit, and other surface transportation programs through the year 2004. TEA-21 continues the trend initiated in 1991 by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). ISTEA brought closure to the federal Interstate highway construction era and ushered in new methods of distributing federal transportation dollars.

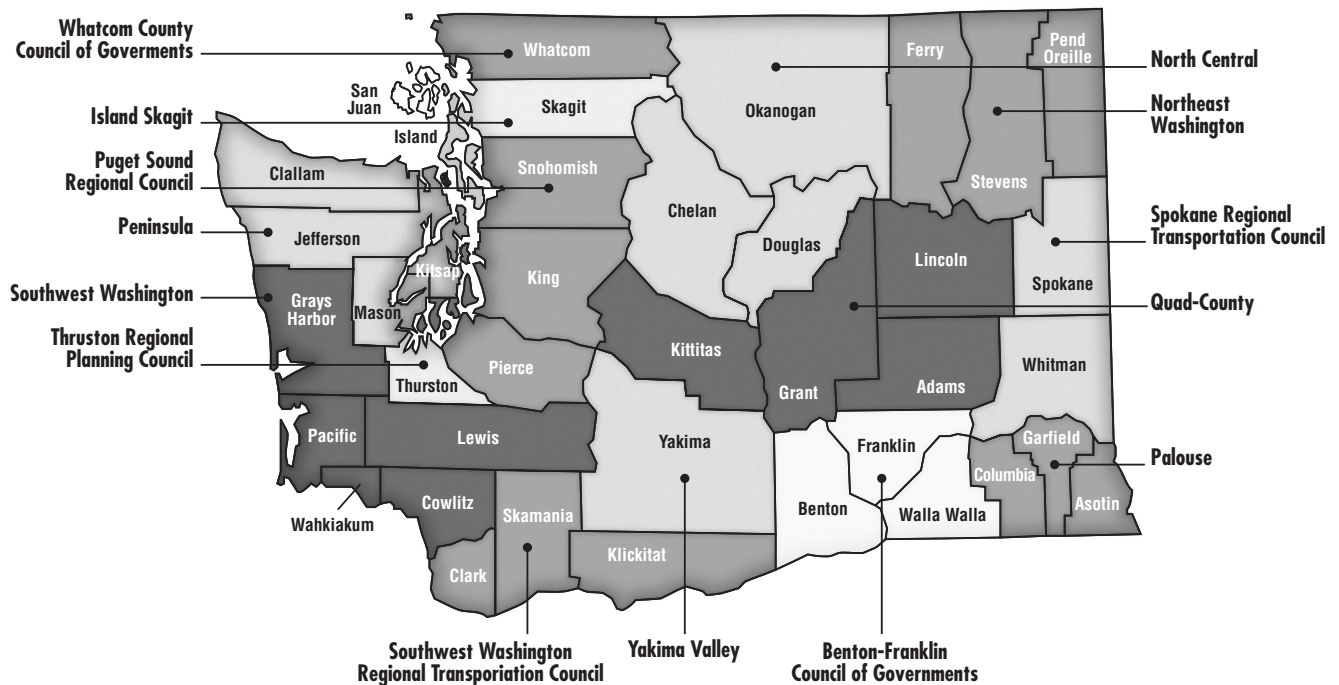
TEA-21 gives local agencies a strong voice and reaffirms the importance of statewide and metropolitan transportation planning activities at the state and regional levels. Below is a list of important federal planning requirements.

(a) **Statewide Planning.** 23 USC 135 and 23 CFR 450 — subpart B outline the federal requirements for statewide planning by state departments of transportation.

(b) **Metropolitan Planning.** 23 USC 134 and 23 CFR 450 subpart C — outline the federal requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO).

Each urbanized area (population 50,000 or more) must have an MPO to receive and expend federal transportation capital or operating assistance. Presently, there are eight MPOs in Washington state. (See Figure 120-1.) They are:

- Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG)
- Southwest Washington RTPO (SWW) (Cowlitz-Wahkiakum area)
- Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
- SWW Regional Transportation Council (RTC) (Clark County area)
- Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC)
- Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC)
- Whatcom County Council of Governments (WCCOG)
- Yakima Valley Council of Governments (YVCOG)



**Planning Organizations**

*Figure 120-1*

These organizations include the metropolitan areas prescribed by federal law and also serve as the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) (in some cases covering a larger area). MPOs with a population over 200,000 are also designated as Transportation Management Areas.

Each MPO has a transportation policy board consisting of local elected officials from cities and counties, and representatives from ports, transit agencies, tribes, WSDOT, major employers, the general public, and other local transportation interests. Typically, each MPO also has a technical committee composed of staff from local planning and public works departments, and WSDOT regions.

The results of this transportation planning process are transportation plans and programs that are consistent with, and implement local comprehensive plans. The MPO planning process provides for:

- A forum for gaining local consensus on local transportation needs.
- The creation of a metropolitan transportation plan identifying future transportation facilities and services needed to support and implement local comprehensive plans.
- Targeted transportation studies used to develop the metropolitan transportation plan.
- A forum to decide how to allocate certain categories of transportation funds.
- The development of a three-year list of facilities and services (to be funded by member organizations) called the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).

Metropolitan transportation plans provide a main building block for the development of *Washington's Transportation Plan* created by WSDOT.

## **(2) State Laws: Planning Mandates Shape Project Selection**

The state of Washington has adopted several important laws affecting transportation planning at various levels. These laws provide the frame-

work for transportation decision making, ultimately guiding the programming, design, and construction of transportation facilities and services. The following is a list of the state laws having the most profound impact.

(a) **Statewide Transportation Planning** (RCW 47.06). This set of laws establishes that "... the state has an appropriate role in developing statewide transportation plans." RCW 47.06 specifies that state owned transportation facilities and services, as well as those of state interest, must be addressed in these plans and that these plans shall guide short-term investment decisions and long range vision for transportation system development.

(b) **Washington's Transportation Plan (WTP).** The WTP provides guidance for the development, maintenance, and operation of a comprehensive and balanced multimodal transportation system. The overall direction of the WTP, prepared pursuant to RCW 47.06, is provided by the Washington State Transportation Commission. The WTP provides the direction for investment decision-making at WSDOT for all modes of transportation.

The WTP includes the following subjects concerning all major transportation modes:

- Meeting the federal requirements identified in TEA-21.
- Critical factors affecting transportation.
- Important issues concerning each mode and strategies to solve the problems.
- Plans for development and integration of the various modes of transportation.
- Major improvements in facilities and services to meet transportation needs.
- Financial resources required to implement the recommendations.

The WTP is a dynamic plan that is updated on a regular basis to address changing conditions. Information and recommendations for the plan are received from WSDOT regions and the Olympia Service Center (OSC), Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Transportation

Planning Organizations, local governmental agencies, private transportation operators, and the public.

The WTP addresses transportation facilities owned and operated by the state, including state highways, Washington State Ferries, and state-owned airports. It also addresses facilities and services that the state does not own, but has interest in. These include public transportation, freight rail, intercity passenger rail, marine ports and navigation, nonmotorized transportation, and aviation.

(c) **State Highway System Plan (SHSP or HSP).** The *State Highway System Plan* is the highway component of the broader WTP. The HSP defines *Service Objectives*, *Action Strategies*, and costs to plan for, maintain, operate, preserve, and improve the state highway system for the next 20 years.

The HSP is financially constrained, meaning that some of the transportation strategies in the plan can be constructed with projected financial resources. It also includes strategies that are excluded from the constrained plan but are, nonetheless, identified as needs to be met if and when funding is available.

Because needs listed in the HSP far outstrip projected revenue, the Transportation Commission established a set of priorities for funding projects. (See the *State Highway System Plan*.) The Commission has adopted ten Service Objectives and fifty-three Action Strategies as a way to establish a logical process for identifying and categorizing projects that will receive funding in the next 20 years. These service objectives and action strategies provide the framework for defining 20-years of needs on the state highway system for the HSP. Work that does not fit within one of these 53 action strategies will not be authorized and is not considered in the development of the HSP, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or any budget proposal.

The HSP is updated every two years, in coordination with local plan updates, to reflect completed work and changing transportation needs, policies, and revenues.

A conceptual solution (project) must be included in the HSP for funding to be allocated to the improvement strategy.

(d) **The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A).** Enacted in March 1990, the state's Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities and counties that meet certain population or growth-rate thresholds to adopt comprehensive plans. Jurisdictions that are required to or choose to plan under the GMA must also adopt and enforce ordinances that implement the policies adopted in the comprehensive plans.

A comprehensive plan is a series of coordinated policy statements and formal plans that direct growth. Comprehensive plans articulate how a community will be developed in the future. They include elements that address housing, utilities, capital facilities, economic development, land use, and transportation.

The law requires that the transportation element be consistent with and support the land use element. In Washington, the comprehensive plan carries the force of law and must be developed with full participation by the general public.

Continuous coordination and open discussion during the development of local comprehensive plans are key to developing a valid plan for the growth of the community. Representatives from neighboring jurisdictions, special purpose districts, WSDOT, and others must be involved at the beginning of and throughout the planning process to ensure that the comprehensive plan is consistent with all other state and local plans.

Local comprehensive plans are important to WSDOT because they control how state facilities within the community will be addressed, how state highways will be impacted by local land use, and how access requirements will be met or maintained.

WSDOT seeks to work in partnership with local governments as they develop local comprehensive plans to ensure a balance between the need for mobility and access, while emphasizing design components that improve or maintain the livability of communities. WSDOT reviews and comments on local comprehensive plans and amendments whenever possible.

To avoid unnecessary conflicts and project delays, it is highly recommended that anyone involved in the design of a state facility review local comprehensive plans and initiate early contact with local governments before the design stage.

(e) **Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs)** (RCW 47.80.020). Washington has two types of “regional” or “area wide” transportation planning organizations. One type, with populations over 50,000, the MPO, was already introduced in (1)(b) on federal laws. The other type, the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), are voluntary organizations enabled under state law. Where MPOs existed before RTPOs were enabled, the MPOs became the RTPOs by including rural areas in their plans.

Although voluntary, all cities, counties, ports, tribes, and transit agencies are usually listed as members of an RTPO and their participation is their best way to influence local and statewide transportation planning.

RTPOs perform the same overall functions as MPOs and, like MPOs, provide a forum for information exchange and collective decision making between local governments and WSDOT. WSDOT is represented on each RTPO Policy Board and technical advisory committee.

Fourteen RTPOs exist in Washington State, covering all counties of the state except San Juan County. (See Figure 120-1.) In addition to the eight listed as including MPOs in 120.04(1)(b), there are the following six RTPOs:

- Skagit/Island RTPO
- North Central RTPO (NCRTPO)
- Palouse Economic Development Council RTPO
- Peninsula RTPO
- QUADCO RTPO (central)
- Northeastern Washington RTPO (N. E. W.)

(f) **Transportation Facilities and Services of Statewide Significance** (RCW 47.06.140). The Legislature has declared certain transporta-

tion facilities and services, which promote and maintain significant statewide travel and economic development, to be of statewide significance.

Transportation facilities and services of statewide significance are considered essential state public facilities. (See RCW 36.70A.200.) Essential state public facilities cannot be precluded from operation or expansion by local comprehensive plans and development regulations. This means that the state interest in these facilities and services takes precedence over local interests in the planning process.

Therefore, planning for these transportation facilities and services must be conducted with a statewide perspective in mind. WSDOT, in consultation with others, is responsible for development of a statewide, multimodal plan for these facilities and services. The balance between providing for the free movement of people and goods and the needs of local communities is the main consideration.

Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) are one category of transportation facilities and services of statewide significance. The HSS system was established by the Washington State Transportation Commission, and approved by the Legislature, to identify significant state-owned transportation facilities. The HSS system was also established to define the state and MPO/RTPO roles regarding planning for these facilities.

The HSS includes the Interstate highway system, interregional state principal arterials, and ferry connections that serve statewide travel.

WSDOT, in consultation with others, makes the final decision regarding the acceptable Level of Service (LOS) for highways of statewide significance. The MPOs and the RTPOs, in consultation with WSDOT, set the acceptable LOS on other state highways.

(g) **Functional Classification of Highways and Roadways** (RCW 47.05.021). Functional classification is the grouping of highways, roads, and streets that serve similar functions into distinct systems or classes within the total existing or future highway network. The

objective of functional classification is to define the appropriate role (mobility versus access) of various highways in providing service and influencing development. Generally, the higher functional classification routes provide mobility with higher travel speed and serve longer distance travel. The lower functional classification routes focus on providing access to the land. Functional classification is important in:

- Identifying routes for inclusion in the National Highway System.
- Providing the basis for administering the Surface Transportation Program.
- Determining design levels for a specific route.
- Planning.
- Determining and establishing jurisdictional responsibility.
- Establishing access control.
- Providing information for land use plans and decisions.
- Conducting needs assessments and cost allocation studies.
- Helping to determine the level of maintenance.
- Conducting the priority programming process.

All state highways are subdivided into three functional classifications. See Chapter 440, “Full Design Level,” for definitions of the collector, minor arterial, and principal arterial classifications.

(h) **Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS).** The FGTS is an effort caused by the increasing interest in freight mobility. The FGTS is required by RCW 47.05.021 section 4. It states:

“The transportation commission shall designate a freight and goods transportation system. This statewide system shall include state highways, county roads, and city streets. The commission, in cooperation with cities and counties, shall review and make

recommendations to the legislature regarding policies governing weight restrictions and road closures which affect transportation of freight and goods.”

The FGTS established the tonnage classifications for each state highway, county road, and city street. Ultimately, tonnage influences the funding and design of new facilities or reconstruction of existing facilities.

(i) **Access Control** (RCW 47.50, WAC 468-51, and WAC 468-52). Access control is a program that combines traffic engineering and land use regulatory techniques. Access control balances the desire for access (from adjacent properties to streets and highways) with other elements such as safety, preservation of capacity, support for alternative transportation modes, and preservation and enhancement of communities.

There are two forms of access control: limited access control and managed access control. (See Chapter 1420, “Access Control Design Policy.”) For limited access control, WSDOT purchases the right to limit access to a highway. Managed access control is a regulatory program established by a state law that requires that access to state highways in unincorporated areas be managed by WSDOT to protect the public and preserve highway functionality.

WSDOT has established plans for access control that are consulted when planning transportation improvement strategies. They are the Master Plan for Limited Access Highways and the regional Highway Access Management Classification Reports.

## 120.05 Planning at WSDOT

The role of planning at WSDOT is to identify transportation needs and facilitate the development and implementation of sound, innovative investments and strategies. Many groups within WSDOT conduct planning activities that directly or indirectly influence the design of transportation facilities.

Several modes of transportation are represented by these groups, which advocate, provide technical assistance, and fund and implement programs, projects, and services.

The following is a list of those groups, their roles, and their effect on the design of transportation facilities.

### **(1) Transportation Planning Office**

Three major responsibilities of the Transportation Planning Office (TPO), of the Planning and Programming Service Center in OSC, are to:

- Oversee the development of *Washington's Transportation Plan* (WTP).
- Coordinate planning activities and provide technical assistance to WSDOT regions, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs).
- Collect and process data, conduct studies, and develop travel forecasts.

(a) **Washington's Transportation Plan (WTP).** The Transportation Planning Office coordinates the development of the WTP in partnership with other WSDOT organizations and the MPOs and RTPOs. See 120.04(2)(b) for a description of the WTP.

(b) **OSC Regional Planning.** The Regional Planning Branch of the Transportation Planning Office coordinates planning activities and provides technical assistance to WSDOT regions, the Office of Urban Mobility, eight MPOs, and fourteen RTPOs.

The Regional Planning Branch provides management oversight of the MPOs to ensure fulfillment of federal urban transportation planning regulations in 23 USC 134, and the RTPOs regarding state requirements in RCW 47.80, WAC 468-86, and the WSDOT Regional Planning Standards. The Regional Planning Branch also administers federal and state planning grants for these organizations

(c) **Travel Forecasting.** Travel forecasting and analysis are fundamental to planning and project development at WSDOT. These technical methods provide data for:

- Determining the location of congestion and the extent to which various strategies solve congestion problems.

- Benefit/cost analyses.
- Project design.
- Safety analyses.
- System performance.

See Chapter 130 regarding the data and services available.

### **(2) Public Transportation and Rail Division**

The Public Transportation and Rail Division works to enhance mobility options by managing, coordinating, and advocating for rail and public transportation programs throughout the state. The division's mission is to improve transportation choices, connections, coordination, and efficiency. The division promotes freight rail programs and, in cooperation with Amtrak, passenger rail programs. The division also provides planning, project oversight, financial, and technical assistance to public transportation providers in urban and rural areas. Division staff oversees the State Commute Trip Reduction Program and provides technical assistance and grants to help reduce vehicle miles traveled by commuters in urban regions of the state.

Public Transportation and Rail Division's plans and programs add value to highway and roadway design decisions by emphasizing enhancement, improvement, and coordination of intermodal connections. It is recommended that these plans and programs be referenced during the design process to ensure intermodal coordination and efficiency.

(a) **Public Transportation Office.** Programs of the Public Transportation Office support passenger transportation systems and services through grants, technical assistance, research, and planning. The office works in partnership with local communities and governments to promote, improve, and expand public transportation resources, and accessibility to those resources, for the state. The major emphases in the Public Transportation program are:

- Implement projects and strategies identified in the *Public Transportation and Intercity Rail Passenger Plan for Washington State* and *Washington's Transportation Plan*.



- Identify, support, coordinate, and monitor the planning, capital, and operating funding needs of small urban and rural public transportation providers.
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of public transportation through training, technical assistance, and coordination to all agencies engaged in public transportation including nonprofit agencies, and private-for-profit bus and taxi companies.
- Establish mobility options in areas where public transportation is limited or does not exist.
- Develop, implement, and manage grant programs to enhance and sustain statewide mobility.
- Monitor compliance for safety, including the drug and alcohol programs of rural public transportation providers.

(b) **Rail Office.** Intercity passenger rail and freight rail are the focus of this office. Amtrak intercity rail service and freight rail service are an important part of our state transportation system. Moving people and goods by rail is often safer and more environmentally friendly than adding traffic to our already congested highways. Improvements to the state's rail system, whether funded by the private sector or the public sector, can help mitigate the impacts of our fast growing economy and population.

The *Intercity Rail Passenger Plan for Washington State* defines a system that links major population centers throughout the state and provides the blueprint for needed improvements to these intercity rail systems. The plan emphasizes incrementally upgrading the Amtrak passenger rail system along the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor in western Washington. The vision is to reduce travel times and provide better passenger rail service in the Pacific Northwest. Additional activities are underway in the corridor, requiring extensive coordination among various agencies and private organizations. The corridor also serves some of the world's busiest ports. WSDOT is working with the Puget Sound Regional Council and other area agencies through the Freight Action Strategy for the

Everett-Seattle-Tacoma Corridor (FAST Corridor) project to plan for the elimination of at-grade highway/railroad crossing conflicts and to improve port access.

The *Washington State Freight Rail Plan* fulfills a Federal Railroad Administration requirement that the state establish, update, and revise a rail plan. It also fulfills the Washington State Legislative directive (RCW 47.76.220) that WSDOT prepare and periodically revise a state rail plan that identifies, evaluates, and encourages essential rail services. The plan identifies the abandonment status of various rail lines, provides analysis of the various alternatives to these proposed abandonment's, and provides recommendations that are incorporated into *Washington's Transportation Plan*.

(c) **Transportation Demand Management Office.** The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Office advocates for, creates, and develops effective solutions to capacity constraints within the state transportation system. TDM Office staff provide support and technical assistance within WSDOT, and for external transportation organizations, so demand management programs can be implemented whenever such programs are appropriate and cost effective. Program support is provided in areas such as land use planning, TDM research, parking management, high capacity transportation planning, and policy development for the state's freeway high occupancy vehicle system.

The office also assists public and private employers, jurisdictions, and other interested parties with implementation of RCW 70.94.521 through 551. The goal of the commute trip reduction portion of this law is to reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and the consumption of fossil fuels. Its focus is to get employees who drive to work alone to consider commute trip alternatives.

The TDM Office provides leadership through developing policies and guidelines that help direct public and private investment in the state's transportation system. A key emphasis of the TDM Office is to develop and maintain a TDM Strategic Plan for WSDOT. This plan will help ensure that *Washington's Transportation Plan* and all other internal planning processes

incorporate TDM activities. Regional and local TDM activities and planning functions are further supported by the TDM Office through coordination and implementation of statewide TDM programs, providing public information and marketing tools, and providing training opportunities. The office also administers local TDM grant programs and planning grants that facilitate high capacity transportation development in certain urban areas of the state. The TDM Office also manages the program to monitor safety and security on light rail systems in Washington State.

### **(3) Highways and Local Programs Service Center**

The Highways and Local Programs Service Center includes many important subprograms and offices. The Service Center helps Washington's local agencies develop their local transportation projects and qualify for federal and state funding to cover some of their project costs. This Service Center provides oversight, technical support, and training to help ensure effective delivery of projects being developed by cities, counties, ports, transit, tribes, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, scenic byway organizations, other state and federal agencies, and private nonprofit agencies.

This Service Center coordinates the development of the *State Highway System Plan* (HSP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in partnership with other WSDOT organizations and the MPOs and RTPOs. See discussions of the HSP at 120.04(2)(c), and the STIP at 120.06(3).

Another role of the Highways and Local Programs Service Center is to advocate for meeting highway and local roadway needs and to help to preserve, operate, and enhance Washington's roadways, walkways, and bike routes. This service center is Washington's designated state scenic byways agency.

(a) **Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Office (Nonmotorized).** The Highways and Local Programs Service Center is responsible for

developing bicycle and pedestrian plans and programs to implement the nonmotorized objectives established by the Transportation Commission. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Office in the Olympia Service Center assists design engineers with mode-specific questions. To guide the actions of this office, and those working in the design offices, the Transportation Commission has adopted a *Bicycle Policy Plan* and a *Pedestrian Policy Plan*.

The *Bicycle Policy Plan* addresses four policy issues; bicycle facilities, funding, safety education and enforcement, and promoting bicycling commuting and touring. The plan also identifies the existing state roadway system as the basic network for bicycle travel. The Plan also calls for the road and bridge system to be maintained and improved to help ensure safe access by bicyclists.

WSDOT has a Bicycling Advisory Committee made up of seven citizens. Each citizen represents a region (two for the Northwest Region). The role of the committee is to advise the department on policies, issues, and needed bicycle projects and to provide insight into local bicycle issues and use around the state.

The *Pedestrian Policy Plan* focuses on local and areawide planning for pedestrians, and necessary pedestrian facility types and locations. It calls for:

- Providing pedestrian facilities that complement local business activity.
- Enhancing intermodal access (especially for those with mobility impairments).
- Maintaining the existing transportation system adequately to maximize pedestrian use.

The *State Highway System Plan* identifies four categories of bicycle and pedestrian projects:

- Urban Bicycle Projects: Building short sections of trails along or across state highways to complete local bicycle networks.
- Rural Bicycle Touring Routes: Shoulder improvements along sections of designated state routes.

- Pedestrian Accident Locations: Projects on sections of state routes that have four or more pedestrian-and-motor-vehicle collisions over a six year period.
- Pedestrian Risk Locations: Projects on sections of state routes that have a risk for pedestrian-and-motor-vehicle collisions because of pedestrian activity, traffic conditions, and roadway geometrics.

**(b) Heritage Corridors Program Office.**

The purpose of the Heritage Corridors Program is to preserve the unique scenic character along Washington's transportation corridors, and to provide travelers with a continuing opportunity to appreciate and obtain information regarding unique natural, recreational, cultural, and historical features that are near to or accessible by transportation routes.

The highways, waterways, and trails in Washington State are evaluated by diversely staffed committees to select the most significant corridors to be designated as Scenic Byways or Heritage Tour Routes. Once designated, the routes are identified on the Designated (scenic and recreational) State Highways map (available from the Heritage Corridors Program office). They then become eligible for grants and partnering efforts designed to sustain visual quality and to provide access to features of interest. Scenic Byway and Heritage Tour Route designations along with roadside classification categories (see the *Roadside Manual*) are the means to focus attention on roadside visual elements and the department's role in resource stewardship.

For designated routes, the use of Design Visualization technology is recommended (during the project definition phase) to help in the selection of roadside features such as guard-rail and retaining walls. (See Chapter 710.) If requested early enough, supplemental funding for visual enhancements might be available through the Heritage Corridors Program.

The Heritage Corridors Program office, in the Olympia Service Center, works with the regions and various external entities to develop a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for each designated

route. Information from the CMPs is incorporated into Route Development Plans and from there the projects become part of the *State Highway System Plan*. This process implements the Transportation Commission's service objectives and action strategies related to heritage resources, thus implementing federal and state laws.

The *State Highway System Plan* includes projects designed to:

- Refurbish safety rest areas.
- Ensure public access to safety rest areas.
- Cooperatively promote and interpret heritage resources.
- Provide incentives for alternatives to outdoor advertising.
- Provide multimodal and visual access to heritage resources.
- Develop a statewide network of traveler information services.

Safety rest area information is in Chapter 610 of the *Roadside Manual*.

If a project is on a designated route that has an existing CMP, it will provide considerable information useful to highway designers including:

- Locations of hazards or poorly designed features and possible corrections.
- Plans for accommodating commercial and multimodal traffic.
- A signing plan.

The Heritage Corridors Program office also coordinates the following programs, products, and activities:

- National scenic byways grant administration and outreach.
- Visual & route assessment.
- Corridor Management Plan technical assistance.
- Safety rest area and traveler services plan.
- Route signing guidelines.
- Highway interpretative markers.

- Directional signing for the Watchable Wildlife Program.
- Alternatives to outdoor advertising
- Byway orientation panels.
- Heritage tour guides & brochures.

#### **(4) WSDOT Regions and the Office of Urban Mobility**

The roles of planning at WSDOT regions and at the Office of Urban Mobility (OUM) are similar in many ways. What follows are descriptions of the roles of planning at WSDOT regions and the OUM.

(a) **WSDOT Region Planning.** Each WSDOT region has a Planning Office that has several roles, such as:

- Conducting and overseeing special long range planning studies.
- Coordinating with other planning groups.
- Assisting in development of prioritized plans.
- Administering internal WSDOT programs.
- Exercising access control.
- Performing Developer Services.

For the Olympic and Northwest Regions, many of these planning functions are assigned to the Office of Urban Mobility.

The region Planning Office conducts long range planning studies such as for the *Route Development Plans*, Corridor Master Plans, and site-specific transportation alternatives and studies. These studies evaluate alternative solutions for both existing and projected transportation needs, initiate the long-range public involvement process, and ultimately provide the foundation for inclusion of identified improvement strategies into *Washington's Transportation Plan* (WTP) and the *State Highway System Plan* (HSP).

The region Planning Office coordinates with and assists the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). (See Figure 210-1.) In some cases, the region Planning Office provides the staff support for the local RTPO.

The region works with the Washington State Patrol to include their weigh site and other highway related needs in WSDOT projects.

Often, the region Planning Office is responsible for administering internal WSDOT programs such as traffic modeling, the Travel Demand Management program (TDM), and responding to citizen concerns about pedestrian, bicycle, and other transportation related issues.

Developer Services is the process of reviewing new developments affecting state highways, such as master planned communities, major subdivisions, and commercial projects. Developers provide mitigation for their impacts to the state highway system under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

The region's Planning Office also reviews and comments on local Comprehensive Plans so development regulations, local transportation elements, and WSDOT goals and interests can be consistent.

(b) **The Office of Urban Mobility in Seattle.** The Office of Urban Mobility (OUM), in the Planning and Programming Service Center, has a similar role to a region Planning Office yet the OUM role is more specialized. The OUM oversees long range planning efforts of WSDOT in the four-county Central Puget Sound area of King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap Counties. This is the same area covered by the MPO called the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), located in Seattle. The four-county region is geographically split between WSDOT's Olympic and Northwest Regions. OUM also has the responsibility of coordinating future plans developed by Washington State Ferries with the strategies contained in the *State Highway System Plan*.

The creation of OUM was a response to challenging transportation issues in the rapidly growing Puget Sound area. As transportation challenges have required more intensive coordination in the Puget Sound area, the manner in which WSDOT approached these challenges also needed to change. OUM has greatly improved the coordination of transportation planning efforts between WSDOT, the Puget Sound Regional Council, the local cities, and the four counties.

The Office of Urban Mobility also participates in the review of documents mandated by the Growth Management Act (GMA). This includes the review of draft Comprehensive Plans as well as the Draft Environmental Impact Statements that provide supporting documentation to the Comprehensive Plans. In addition, OUM reviews Draft Environmental Impact Statements for local agency proposals that might affect the operation of state facilities.

Developer Services responsibilities remain with the Northwest and Olympic Region's Planning Offices.

### **(5) Washington State Ferries Division**

The *Long Range Ferry System Plan*, prepared by the Washington State Ferries Division, considers recent trends in ferry ridership, system costs, regional economy, and other system and site factors. It is recommended that designers contact the Washington State Ferries planning office during the design phase of any conceptual solution occurring near a ferry terminal or one that might add significant traffic to or around a ferry terminal.

### **(6) Aviation Division**

The Aviation Division is a nonregulatory agency that:

- Provides general aviation airport aid, including an award-winning lighting program.
- Provides technical assistance for airspace and incompatible land use matters.
- Coordinates all air search and rescue and air disaster relief.
- Administers pilot and aircraft registration.

This division is responsible for development of the *Washington State Airport System Plan*. The division also operates seventeen state airports strategically placed throughout the state.

## **120.06 Linking Transportation Plans**

The main concern of the traveling public is that the transportation system allows them to move from point A to point B quickly, safely, and with

the least inconvenience and expense. To fulfill the public demand, coordination of transportation planning efforts is essential to the creation of the seamless transportation system.

### **(1) Coordination of Planning Efforts**

Coordination of planning efforts between city, county, MPO, RTPO, public and private transportation provider, and state transportation plans is not only required by federal and state laws — it makes good business sense. Coordination of transportation planning is a cyclical process and begins as a bottom-up approach. Figure 120-2 is a diagram that explains the general relationships between the various transportation planning processes and organizations.

Cities and counties explore their needs and develop *comprehensive plans*. Among other components, each comprehensive plan contains a land use element and a transportation element, which must be consistent with each other. The transportation element (sometimes known as the *local transportation plan*) supports the land use element. The requirements in the Growth Management Act (see 120.04 (2)(d)) guide most of the comprehensive plans developed in the state of Washington.

MPOs and RTPOs coordinate and develop metropolitan and regional transportation plans. These plans cover multiple cities and, for RTPOs, encompass at least one county. The purpose of metropolitan transportation plans and regional transportation plans is to ensure that the policies, plans, and programs of each jurisdiction are consistent with neighboring jurisdictions.

Planning is undertaken to ensure consistent policy among all the various jurisdictions; whether state, regional, or local. It does not matter where the planning process begins because the process is both cyclic and iterative. If one component of a plan changes it may or may not affect other components. If any one plan changes significantly, it can affect each of the other plans in the cycle. Early communication and coordination of conceptual solutions are critical to ensuring project delivery.

## **(2) Transportation Improvement Programs**

Figure 120-3 shows the coordination of effort that produces consistent and comprehensive transportation plans and programs.

From these transportation plans, each town, city, county, and public transportation provider develops a detailed list of projects that will be constructed in the next three or six years. This detailed list of transportation projects is called the six year Regional Transportation Improvement Program also known as the Six-Year RTIP or the three-year Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).

The six-year RTIP and the three-year MTIP must be financially constrained, meaning that the total cost of all projects cannot exceed the established revenue authority. Financially constraining the RTIP and the MTIP is one method used to ensure that the list of projects represents what the local agency intends to build in the near future to implement local transportation plans. Once each town, city, and county develops its individual TIP, the RTPO and the MPO compile these individual TIPs into a regional or metropolitan TIP.

See Figure 120-3.

Each RTPO/MPO completes a Regional or Metropolitan Improvement Program (RTIP or MTIP) at least once every two years (RCW 47.80.023). The RTIP/MTIPs must meet the requirements of both federal and state laws regarding transportation improvement programs and plans. To achieve this, the RTIP/MTIP:

- Is cooperatively developed by local government agencies, public transit agencies, and the Department of Transportation within each area.
- Includes all federally funded WSDOT Highway Construction Program projects.
- Includes all significant transportation projects, programs, and transportation demand management measures proposed to be implemented during each year of the next period.

- Identifies all significant projects, whether funded by state or federal funds.
- Includes all significant projects from the local transit development plans and comprehensive transportation programs required by RCW 35.58.2795, 35.77.010(2), and 36.81.121(2) for transit agencies, cities, towns, and counties.
- Includes all transportation projects funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- Includes all federally funded public lands transportation projects.
- Includes all WSDOT projects regardless of funding source and clearly designates regionally significant projects as such.
- Complies with all state (RCW 70.94) and federal (40 CFR 51 & 93) Clean Air Act requirements (where applicable).
- Includes only projects consistent with local, regional, and metropolitan transportation plans.
- Includes a financial section outlining how the RTIP/MTIP is financially constrained, showing sources and amounts of funding reasonably expected to be received for each year of the ensuing six/three-year period, and includes an explanation of all assumptions supporting the expected levels of funding.

Funding agencies give preference to jointly sponsored transportation projects. RTPOs and MPOs can develop jointly sponsored projects since they represent multiple agencies. Major projects backed by an RTPO or an MPO have an excellent chance of receiving funding.

## **(3) Development of the STIP**

An important role of the WSDOT Highways and Local Programs Service Center is to collect all RTIP, MTIP, and HSP projects and assemble all of the state and federally funded projects, and the projects of regional significance, into the (three-year) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Development of a new STIP every two years is required by federal law in order to expend federal transportation dollars. The state of Washington, however, develops a new STIP each year to enhance project flexibility and to ensure project delivery.

The Governor's approval of the MTIPs; plus the Federal Highway Administration's, and the Federal Transit Administration's approval of the STIP; are required prior to expenditure of federal funds.

## 120.07 Linking WSDOT Planning to Programming

Figure 120-4 is a process flow chart describing the overall process that a conceptual solution must go through to receive funding. This chart also generally describes the links (the symbiotic relationship) between planning and program development. Project Definition is presented in Chapter 330, Design Matrices are in Chapter 325, and Environmental Documentation is in Chapter 220.

The role of WSDOT planning is to determine *what* facilities or services will be provided *where*. The role of WSDOT programming is to determine *when* the improvements will be provided. The WSDOT Program Management Office prioritizes the projects that are selected from the financially constrained *State Highway System Plan* component of *Washington's Transportation Plan*. (See 120.04(2)(b).)

See Chapter 140, "Programming," for a discussion of the programming process as a whole. Chapter 150, "Project Development," relates planning and programming to the process of developing a project.

### (1) The Role of the Program Management Office

Taking the HSP from the planning stage through the programming stage is the role of the Program Management Office of the Planning and Programming Service Center. The Program Management Office manages the statewide highway construction program including:

- Recommending subprogram funding levels.
- Developing project priorities.
- Preparing, executing, and monitoring the highway construction program.

One of the important processes the Program Management Office oversees is a process termed the *Programming Process*. The legislative authorization for this process is in RCW 47.05 under Priority Programming. The Programming Process is really the prioritization of projects that have been identified in the HSP. The Programming Process determines the order in which the needs (identified in each improvement category in the financially constrained HSP) are solved.

Subprogram categories for the service objectives and action strategies have been established, by the Transportation Commission, within WSDOT's budget to allow decision makers to determine timing and the amount of money to invest in solving transportation needs. (See the HSP for the service objectives and action strategies.) The order of the needs within each subprogram category is usually prioritized based on benefit/cost methodology; however, some subprograms do not have a prioritization methodology attached to them (such as Economic Initiatives).

The Commission may combine projects that are scheduled to be within a six-year time period to eliminate constructing projects at the same location just a few years apart.

Following completion of construction, the department evaluates the effectiveness that solving those needs had on the performance of the transportation system.

### (2) WSDOT Budgets

WSDOT uses the financially constrained *State Highway System Plan* component of the twenty-year *Washington's Transportation Plan* as the basis for prioritizing and programming to select projects for the Agency Request Budget (ARB) and Current Law Budget (CLB). To be selected, a project must already be included in the HSP and, if federally funded, the STIP.

Currently, WSDOT operates on a two-year funding cycle. This is primarily because the state Legislature appropriates state transportation funds on a biennial basis. To better implement the intent of federal and state laws influencing transportation and land use, to encourage a longer range perspective in the funding of transportation projects, and to be consistent with local and regional transportation planning processes, the Washington State Transportation Commission is developing a Six Year Plan Element. WSDOT's Six Year Plan Element will be used by the Commission to develop the two-year budget proposals.

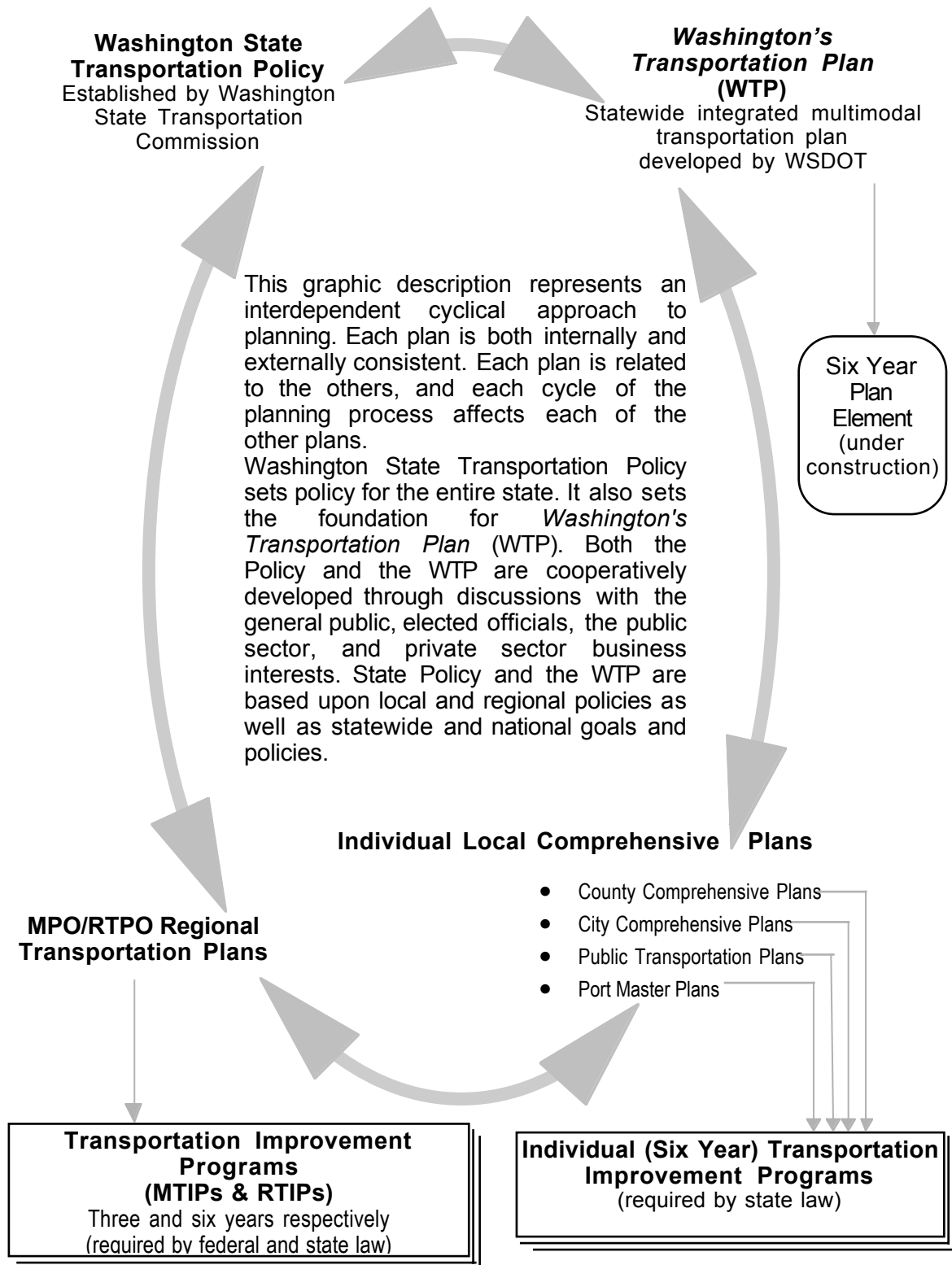
When appropriated by the Legislature, WSDOT's two-year budget is forwarded to the appropriate RTPOs and MPOs for any needed revisions to the RTIPs and MTIPs.

### **(3) Key Points of Planning and Programming at WSDOT**

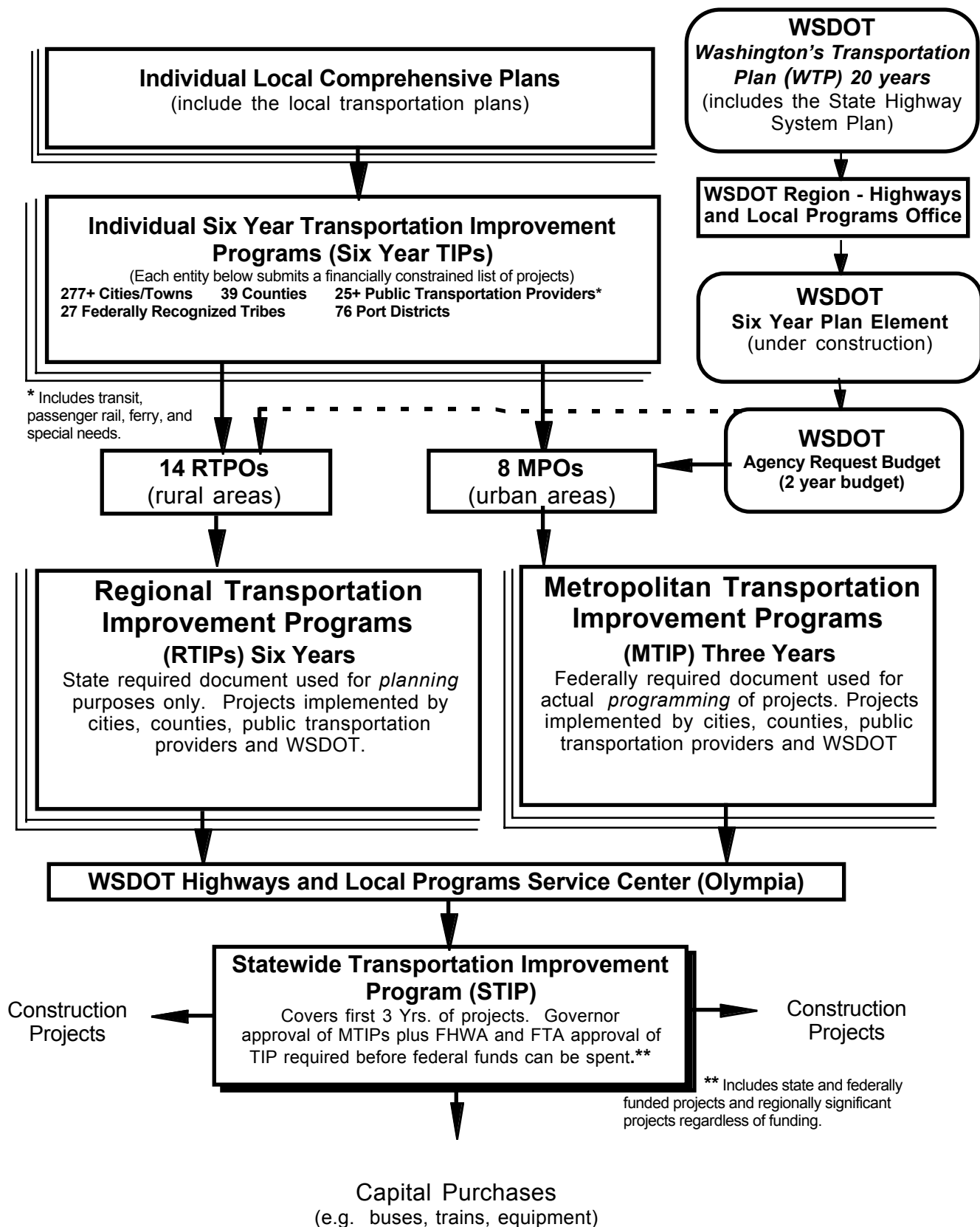
Below is a list of key points to remember about the planning and programming process:

- Commission Policy sets the direction for *Washington's Transportation Plan* (WTP).
- Federal transportation laws and state transportation and land use laws guide our solutions to the needs for transportation facilities and services.
- The WTP is developed in partnership with MPOs and RTPOs and is tied directly to the land use plans of towns, cities, and counties.
- The region's Planning Offices have the main responsibility for meeting many of the state and federal planning requirements.
- The *State Highway System Plan* is a component of the WTP.
- The *State Highway System Plan* sets forth service objectives and action strategies to implement Commission policy.
- A budget structure is developed to implement each action strategy.
- Conceptual solutions are prioritized within most budget categories based on benefit/cost analyses to obtain the greatest benefit.
- Tradeoffs between project categories are made by policy choice through a multitiered process (executives, Commission, and Legislature).
- An improvement strategy must be listed in the *State Highway System Plan* to be considered for project funding.
- If federally funded, a strategy must be listed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to be considered for funding.

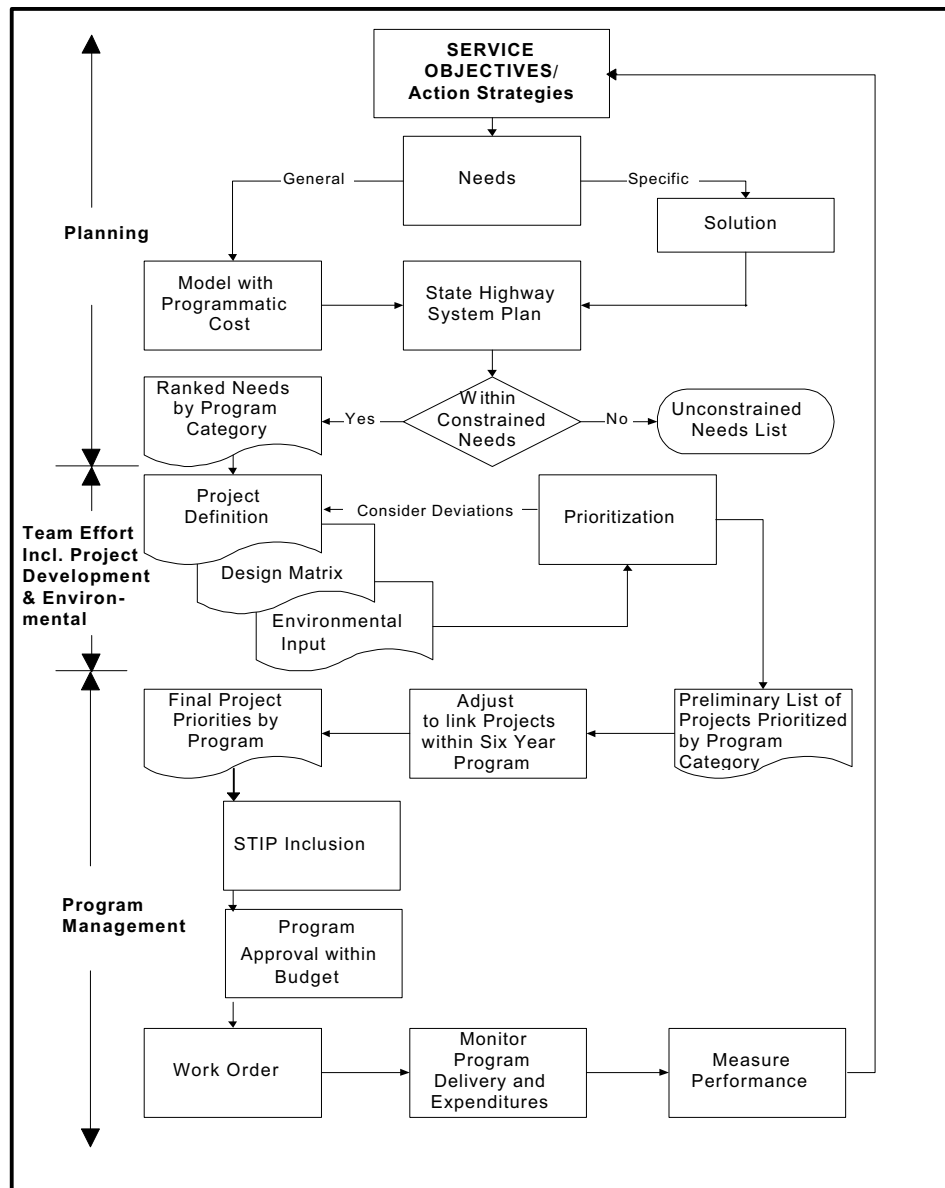




**Transportation Plan Relationships**  
*Figure 120-2*



**RTIP, MTIP, and STIP Development Process**  
*Figure 120-3*

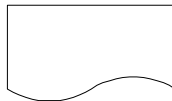


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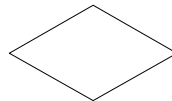
Activity



Document



Decision



Terminal



## Planning and Programming Links

Figure 120-4